

Examiner Questions and responses

6th Jul 26

The examiner has directed these questions at the Parish Council. In this document I have attempted to answer questions 2 to 18.

Annex 2: Examiner Questions

From my initial reading of the Giddings, Winwick and Hamerton Neighbourhood Plan, the supporting evidence and the representations that have been made to the Plan, I have the following questions for Huntingdonshire District Council and Great and Little Gidding Parish Council. I have requested the submission of responses by **Friday 17 July 2026**.

Where I am requesting additional clarification, suggested text and similar, this is with a view to informing the specific terms of any relevant examiner modification(s) that I may recommend. Accordingly, all of the points set out below flow from the requirement to satisfy the Basic Conditions.

Questions for Huntingdonshire District Council

1. Is all or any part of the neighbourhood area the subject of any local nature recovery strategy under Section 104 of the Environment Act 2021?

Questions for Great and Little Giddings Parish Council

2. If relevant, does the Parish Council consider the Plan is compatible with any local nature recovery strategy under Section 104 of the Environment Act 2021?

Considered not relevant

104 Local nature recovery strategies for England

- (1) There are to be local nature recovery strategies for areas in England.
- (2) Together the local nature recovery strategies are to cover the whole of England.
- (3) The Secretary of State is to determine the areas within England to which individual local nature recovery strategies are to relate.
- (4) The area of a local authority, other than a county council, may not be split between local nature recovery strategies.
- (5) Section 40(2A) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (duty to conserve biodiversity) makes provision about the duties of public authorities in relation to local nature recovery strategies.

Huntingdonshire District Council utilizes the Nature Recovery Network for Huntingdonshire (NRNH) report—produced in partnership with the Wildlife

Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire—as a foundational evidence base to guide the district's planning policy and Green Lens environmental initiatives.

The only part of the local nature recovery strategy within the NP area is the Alconbury Brook shown on Page 4 of the report. There are no specific actions regarding the Brook but the NP does raise the issue of slowing down the flow of flood water.

3. Does the Parish Council consider that the Plan is compatible with the development and use of land in the Neighbourhood Area contributing to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change?

The NP proposes small scale future development which makes it compatible with the strategies that contribute to the mitigation of climate change. The NP also highlights Section 10 The Green Agenda such as the pressure on electricity supplies, the over reliance on private transport (better bus service required) and the flood risk to Hamerton of Alconbury Brook.

4. The front cover of the Plan shows the date “2023”. Paragraph 5.1.1 of the Plan states, “A plan period of 2036 has been chosen to match the plan period of the HDC Local Plan to 2036.” Please confirm that the Plan period is to be taken as 2023 to 2036.

Confirmed. Yes the plan is from 2023 to 2036. 2023 is when we started the NP.

5. Please confirm the dates (within August and September 2025) when the Regulation 14 consultation formally started and finished.

The formal Consultation period started on 27th July and ended on 26th September 2025

6. GWH NP POLICY 1, 1 – avoiding the introduction of *inclusive elements*: What are “inclusive elements”?

Inclusive should have read intrusive. Apologies: it has been corrected. Intrusive elements are developments that are out of keeping with the rural nature of the 3 villages and 2 hamlets that would threaten the harmony and rural character of the area as outlined in the GWH Village Contextual Analysis.

7. GWH NP POLICY 1, 1 – “key views and vistas”: Are these defined anywhere? Are these the “Important views across GWH” shown in Figure 15? Are there others?

The important rural views are shown in Section 15 although there are further views outlined in the GWH Village Contextual Analysis, Appendix D regarding the vistas between houses in the Great Gidding Conservation Zone. There are no verbal

descriptions but there are numerous photographs that are related by number back to the plan.

8. GWH NP POLICY 1, 2 – “Gidwickhams Contextual Analysis”: Is this the same as the GWH Village Contextual Analysis, October 2025? Why is it called *Gidwickhams* Contextual Analysis?

It is the same document. Apologies: it has been corrected to GWH Village in NP Policy 1.1 Section 2

9. GWH NP POLICY 1, 2: In this part of the policy, what does “with reference” mean? Does this mean that the demonstration of character and identity should cross-refer to the Contextual Analysis?

Point 2 within the Policy has been reworded to the following:

The character of new proposed developments (large or small) should reflect and respect the existing character of the individual settlements. The GWH Village Contextual Analysis provides a baseline of knowledge regarding the built form, scale and details. The GWH Village Contextual Analysis provides several surveys with information on existing structures as a guide to proposed new developments.

10. GWH NP POLICY 1, 2 – requirement for locally distinctive built form, scale, proportions, details and materials: Does this mean that all these elements are to be locally distinctive (in some way distinguishable from the rest of the development in the villages); or is it a reference to the distinctive built form etc of the villages?

See above

11. GWH NP POLICY 1, 8: Can every residential unit be expected to have direct access to an area of private amenity space? For example, a first-floor apartment would not normally have *direct* access, even though private amenity space may be available for the use of the occupants.

The NP area covers a very rural part of Huntingdonshire. There are no residential properties that do not have their own garden as shown in the GWH Village Contextual Analysis Section 10.1. There are currently no apartments across GWH and any proposal for an apartment would be out of keeping with the area.

12. GWH NP POLICY 1, 9: The Nationally described space standard can only be applied, through development plan policy, where there is evidence of local need and where the viability of development is not compromised. Please comment on these considerations in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan.

We are trying to be consistent with the views and policies of HDC. The GWH Village Contextual Analysis shows that the majority of residential properties are medium to large detached houses. As such any small proposed properties would not be in keeping with the existing housing stock

13. GWH NP POLICY 2, 4 – Standard Water Planning Guidance: Has the correct reference been used? What does water guidance have to do with broadband provision? The referenced guidance does not appear to deal with open access ducting. Where is guidance “to industry standards” to be found?

The water guidance should have been under bullet point 3 and the national guidance from Open Reach has been added to bullet point 4

14. GWH NP POLICY 3, 1 – 20% biodiversity net gain: The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that, *“Plan-makers should not seek a higher percentage than the statutory objective of 10% biodiversity net gain, either on an area-wide basis or for specific allocations for development unless justified. To justify such policies they will need to be evidenced including as to local need for a higher percentage, local opportunities for a higher percentage and any impacts on viability for development. Consideration will also need to be given to how the policy will be implemented.”*^[1]
Please comment on these considerations in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan.

GWH is a very rural area where developers are not constrained by space - the population density is low as are local amenities. The community has in meetings and the survey stated that they are keen on biodiversity. When we read the guidelines we took 10% as the minimum, not the maximum

How is biodiversity net gain applied through the planning process?

The statutory framework for biodiversity net gain has been designed as a post-permission matter to ensure that the biodiversity gain objective of achieving at least a 10% gain in biodiversity value will be met for development granted planning permission. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>

Most houses have large plots. Given the space available and the priority to continue to be rural we took the “at least a 10%” to be a minimum and therefore set it at 20%. This has been supported in our local consultation period although Anglian Water wants us to revise the policy and propose

“We suggest that essential infrastructure improvements where there is no scope for BNG onsite should be exempt from the new 20% BNG requirement.”

The counter argument to this is the observation from HDC who stated

“HDC had the ambition to also set a 20% net gain in biodiversity through the Preferred Options Local Plan, however this has now been revised from a 20% BNG requirement to a 10% requirement, to align with the emerging requirements in national policy.”

We believe the amendment by Anglian Water is pragmatic but would still want 20% as our area policy. We wrote the document before the National Policy is being revised further to exclude smaller development

15. GWH NP POLICY 3, 2 – Loss of natural habitats: Is this provision intended to apply to any and all natural habitats?

Yes it was. Is this a problem?

16. GWH NP POLICY 5 – Local Green Spaces: Is it the intention that the referenced Local Green Spaces should be formally designated through Policy 5?

Yes, that was our intention.

17. GWH NP POLICY 5: Have all the owners of the Local Green Spaces been specifically consulted regarding designation.^[2] Please supply details including copies of any objections received.

All the designated green areas are owned by the Parishes except for the Kings Wood which is owned by Michael Trolove. He has given his permission to include it. We have received permission from all the Parishes to designate them as Green Spaces and received no objections.

18. GWH NP POLICY 5 – 1: There is reference in the policy to nine recognised green spaces; but Paragraph 15.10.1 of the Neighbourhood Plan also refers to 6 churchyards (not dealt with in the Local Green Spaces Evidence Report). What is the intended status of the churchyards?

5 church yards are owned by the Church of England and 1 is associated to the Methodist Chapel. We decided not to include them as Green Spaces because as church congregations decline so conversions to residential use may become more popular.

^[1] See PPG section on '*Biodiversity net gain*' (PPG Reference ID: 74-006-20240214).

^[2] See PPG section on '*Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space*' (PPG Reference ID: 37-019-20140306).